

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated August 6, 2007. Claims 1 to 14 are in the application, with Claims 1, 10, and 14 being independent. Claims 1 and 10 have been amended herein, and Claim 14 has been newly added. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 3, and 5 to 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 6,175,075 (Shiotsuka). Claims 2 and 4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Shiotsuka in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,291,763 (Nakamura). The rejections are respectfully traversed.

According to a feature of the invention as recited by Claim 1, a thickness of a part of the coating film which is in contact with the electrode portion is smaller than the average thickness of the coating film.

Neither Shiotsuka nor Nakamura, even in the proposed combination, assuming, *arguendo*, that such could be combined, is seen to disclose or suggest at least the above-discussed feature.

Shiotsuka describes a collecting electrode 406 which includes a metallic wire 406a covered by a coating layer 406b. See col. 14, lines 57 to 61, and Fig. 4. However, nowhere is Shiotsuka seen to describe that a thickness of a part of the coating layer 406b which is in contact with the metallic wire 406a is smaller than the average thickness of the coating layer.

According to a combination of features recited by Claim 14, (i) the electrode portion is provided outside of a power generation region of the photovoltaic element, (ii)

the photovoltaic element has collector electrodes on the power generation region, and (iii) the coating film covers the power generation region and the collector electrodes.

Shiotsuka and Nakamura are also not seen to disclose or suggest the above-discussed combination of features recited by Claim 14.

The dependent claims are also submitted to be patentable because they set forth additional aspects of the present invention and are dependent from at least one of the independent claims discussed above. Therefore, separate and individual consideration of each dependent claim is respectfully requested.

The application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

No fees are believed due; however, should it be determined that additional fees are required, the Director is hereby authorized to charge such fees and any additional fees under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 and 1.17 which may be required during the entire pendency of this application, or to credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account 50-3939.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office by telephone at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should be directed to our address given below.

Respectfully submitted,

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FCIS_WS 1717108v1